

THE TOWER



MACMILLAN AND CO LIMITED
LONDON BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK BOSTON CHICAGO
DALLAS SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO

THE TOWER

BY

W B. YEATS

MACMILLAN AND CO, LIMITED
ST MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1929

COPYRIGHT

First Edition February 1928

Reprinted March 1928

Reprinted 1929

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

BY R & R CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SAILING TO BYZANTIUM	1
THE TOWER	4
MEDITATIONS IN TIME OF CIVIL WAR	16
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETEEN	32
THE WHEEL	42
YOUTH AND AGE	43
THE NEW FACES	44
A PRAYER FOR MY SON	45
TWO SONGS FROM A PLAY	47
WISDOM	49
LEDA AND THE SWAN	51
ON A PICTURE OF A BLACK CENTAUR	53
AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN	55
COLONUS' PRAISE	61
THE HERO, THE GIRL, AND THE FOOL	64
OWEN AHERN AND HIS DANCERS	67
A MAN YOUNG AND OLD	70

	PAGE
THE THREE MONUMENTS	79
FROM 'OEDIPUS AT COLONUS'	80
THE GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID	82
ALL SOULS' NIGHT	98
<hr/>	
NOTES	105

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

I

THAT is no country for old men. The
 young
In one another's arms, birds in the
 trees,
—Those dying generations—at their
 song,
The salmon - falls, the mackerel -
 crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all
 summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless

I

B

2 SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder
sing

For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but study-
ing

Monuments of its own magnificence ;
And therefore I have sailed the seas
and come

To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a
gyre,

And be the singing masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away ; sick with
desire

And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is ; and gather
me

Into the artifice of eternity.

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM 3

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural
thing,
But such a form' as Grecian gold-
smiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep drowsy emperor awake ;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

THE TOWER

I

WHAT shall I do with this absurdity—
O heart, O troubled heart—this caricature,
Decrepit age that has been tied to me
As to a dog's tail ?

Never had I more
Excited, passionate, fantastical
Imagination, nor an ear and eye
That more expected the impossible—
No, not in boyhood when with rod
and fly,
Or the humbler worm, I climbed Ben
Bulben's back
And had the livelong summer day to
spend.

It seems that I must bid the Muse go
 pack,
Choose Plato and Plotinus for a friend
Until imagination, ear and eye,
Can be content with argument and
 deal
In bstract things ; or be derided by
A sort of battered kettle at the heel

II

I pace upon the battlements and stare
On the foundations of a house, or
 where
Tree, like a sooty finger, st rts from
 the earth ;
And send imagination forth
Under the day's declining be m, and
 call
Images and memories
From ruin or from ancient trees,
For I would ask a question of them all.

Beyond that ridge lived Mrs. French,
and once
When every silver candlestick or
sconce
Lit up the dark mahogany and the wine,
A serving man that could divine
That most respected lady's every wish,
Ran and with the garden shears
Clipped an insolent farmer's ears
And brought them in a little covered
dish.

Some few remembered still when I was
young
A peasant girl commended by a song,
Who'd lived somewhere upon that
rocky place,
And praised the colour of her face,
And had the greater joy in praising
her,
Remembering that, if walked she there,
Farmers jostled at the fair
So great a glory did the song confer.

And certain men, being maddened by
those rhymes,
Or else by toasting her a score of times,
Rose from the table and declared it right
To test their fancy by their sight ;
But they mistook the brightness of
the moon
For the prosaic light of day—
Music had driven their wits astray—
And one was drowned in the great bog
of Cloone.

Strange, but the man who made the
song was blind,
Yet, now I have considered it, I find
That nothing strange ; the tragedy
began
With Homer that was a blind man,
And Helen has all living hearts
betrayed.
O may the moon and sunlight seem
One inextricable beam,
For if I triumph I must make men mad.

And I myself created Hanrahan
And drove him drunk or sober through
the dawn
From somewhere in the neighbouring
cottages.
Caught by an old man's juggleries
He stumbled, tumbled, fumbled to and
fro
And had but broken knees for hire
And horrible splendour of desire ,
I thought it all out twenty years ago .

Good fellows shuffled cards in an old
bawn ;
And when that ancient ruffian's turn
was on
He so bewitched the cards under his
thumb
That all, but the one card, became
A pack of hounds and not a pack of
cards,
And that he changed into a hare
Hanrahan rose in frenzy there

And followed up those baying creatures
towards—

O towards I have forgotten what—
enough !

I must recall a man th t neither love
Nor music nor an enemy's clipped ear
Could, he was so harried, cheer ;
A figure that has grown so fabulous
There's not a neighbour left to say
When he finished his dog's day :
An ancient bankrupt master of this
house.

Before that run came, for centuries,
Rough men-at-arms, cross-gartered to
the knees
Or shod in iron, climbed the narrow
stairs,
And certain men-at-arms there were
Whose images, in the Great Memory
stored,
Come with loud cry and panting bre st

To break upon a sleeper's rest
While their great wooden dice beat on
the board.

As I would question all, come all who
c n ;
Come old, necessitous, half-mounted
man ;
And bring beauty's blind rambling
celebrant ;
The red man the juggler sent
Through God-forsaken meadows ; Mrs.
French,
Gifted with so fine an ear ;
The man drowned in a bog's mire,
When mocking muses chose the
country wench.

Did all old men and women, rich and
poor,
Who trod upon these rocks or passed
this door,
Whether in public or in secret rage

As I do now against old age ?
But I have found an answer in those
 eyes
That are imp tinent to be gone ;
Go therefore ; but leave Hanrahan
For I need all his mighty memories.

Old lecher with a love on every wind
Bring up out of that deep considering
 mind
All that you have discovered in the
 grave,
For it is certain that you have
Reckoned up every unforeknown, un-
 seeing
Plunge, lured by a softening eye,
Or by a touch or a sigh,
Into the l byrinth of another's being ;

Does the imagination dwell the most
Upon a woman won or woman lost ?
If on the lost, admit you turned aside
From a great labyrinth out of pride,

Cowardice, some silly over-subtle
thought

Or anything called conscience once,
And that if memory recur, the sun's
Under eclipse and the day blotted out

III

It is time that I wrote my will ;
I choose upstanding men,
That climb the streams until
The fountain leap, and at dawn
Drop their cast at the side
Of dripping stone ; I declare
They shall inherit my pride,
The pride of people that were
Bound neither to Cause nor to State,
Neither to slaves that were spat on,
Nor to the tyrants that spat,
The people of Burke and of Grattan
That gave, though free to refuse—
Pride, like that of the morn,
When the headlong light is loose,
Or that of the fabulous horn,

Or that of the sudden shower
When all streams re dry,
Or that of the hour
When the swan must fix his eye
Upon a fading gleam,
Float out upon a long
Last reach of glittering stream
And there sing his last song
And I declare my faith ;
I mock Plotinus' thought
And cry in Plato's teeth,
Death and life were not
Till man made up the whole,
Made lock, stock and barrel
Out of his bitter soul,
Aye, sun and moon and star, all,
And further add to that
That, being dead, we rise,
Dream and so create
Translunar Paradise.
I have prepared my peace
With learned Italian things
And the proud stones of Greece,

Poet's imaginings
And memories of love,
Memories of the words of women,
All those things whereof
Man makes a superhuman,
Mirror-resembling dream.

As at the loophole there,
The daws chatter and scream,
And drop twigs layer upon layer.
When they have mounted up,
The mother bird will rest
On their hollow top,
And so warm her wild nest.

I leave both faith and pride
To young upstanding men
Climbing the mountain side,
That under bursting dawn
They may drop a fly ;
Being of that metal made
Till it was broken by
This sedentary trade.

Now shall I make my soul
Compelling it to study
In a learned school
Till the wreck of body,
Slow decay of blood,
Frenzied delirium
Or dull decrepitude,
Or what worse evil come—
The death of friends, or death
Of every brilliant eye
That made me catch in the breath—
Seem but the clouds of the sky
When the horizon fades ;
Or a bird's sleepy cry
Among the deepening shades.

MEDITATIONS IN TIME OF
CIVIL WAR

I

ANCESTRAL HOUSES

SURELY among a rich man's flowering
lawns,
Amid the rustle of his planted hills,
Life overflows without ambitious
pains ;
And rains down life until the basin
spills,
And mounts more dizzy high the more
it rains
As though to choose whatever shape
it wills
And never stoop to mechanic l,
Or servile shape, at others' beck and
call.

Mere dreams, mere dreams ! Yet
Homer had not sung
Had he not found it certain beyond
dreams
That out of life's own self-delight had
sprung
The abounding glittering jet ; though
now it seems
As if some marvellous empty sea-shell
flung
Out of the obscure dark of the rich
streams,
And not a fountain, were the symbol
which
Sh dows the inherited glory of the rich.

Some violent bitter man, some power-
ful man
Called architect and artist in, that they,
Bitter and violent men, might rear in
stone
The sweetness that all longed for night
and d y,

The gentleness none there had ever
known ;
But when the master's buried mice
can play,
And maybe the great-grandson of that
house,
For all its bronze and marble, 's but a
mouse.

Oh, what if gardens where the peacock
strays
With delicate feet upon old terraces,
Or else all Juno from an urn dis-
plays
Before the indifferent garden deities ;
Oh, what if levelled lawns and gravelled
ways
Where slippèred Contemplation finds
his ease
And Childhood a delight for every .
sense,
But take our greatness with our
violence !

MEDITATIONS 19

What if the glory of escutcheoned
doors,
And buildings that a haughtier age
designed,
The pacing to and fro on polished
floors
Amid great chambers and long
galleries, lined
With famous portraits of our ancestors ;
What if those things the greatest of
mankind
Consider most to magnify, or to bless,
But take our greatness with our
bitterness !

II

MY HOUSE

. An ancient bridge, and a more ancient
tower,
A farmhouse that is sheltered by its
wall,

An acre of stony ground,
Where the symbolic rose can break in
flower,
Old ragged elms, old thorns innumer-
able,
The sound of the rain or sound
Of every wind that blows ;
The stilted water-hen
Crossing stream again
Scared by the splashing of a dozen
cows ;

A winding stair, a chamber arched
with stone,
A grey stone fireplace with an open
hearth,
A candle and written page.
Il Penseroso's Platonist toiled on
In some like chamber, shadowing forth
How the daemonic rage
Imagined everything.
Benighted travellers
From market and from fairs

Have seen his midnight candle glim-
mering.

Two men have founded here. A man-
at- arms
Gathered a score of horse and spent
his days
In this tumultuous spot,
Where through long wars and sudden
night alarms
His dwindling score and he seemed
castaways
Forgetting and forgot ;
And I, that after me
My bodily heirs may find,
To exalt a lonely mind,
Befitting emblems of adversity.

III

MY TABLE

Two heavy trestles, and a board
Where Sato's gift, a changeless sword,

By pen and paper lies,
That it may moralise
My days out of their aimlessness.
A bit of an embroidered dress
Covers its wooden sheath.
Chaucer had not drawn breath
When it was forged In Sato's house,
Curved like new moon, moon-luminous,
It lay five hundred years.
Yet if no change appears
No moon ; only an aching heart
Conceives a changeless work of art.
Our learned men have urged
That when and where 'twas forged
A marvellous accomplishment,
In painting or in pottery, went
From father unto son
And through the centuries ran
And seemed unchanging like the
sword
Soul's beauty being most adored,
Men and their business took
The soul's unchanging look ;

For the most rich inheritor,
Knowing that none could pass Heaven's
door

That loved inferior art,
Had such an aching heart
That he, although a country's talk
For silken clothes and stately walk,
Had waking wits ; it seemed
Juno's peacock screamed

IV

MY DESCENDANTS

Having inherited a vigorous mind
From my old fathers, I must nourish
dreams
And leave a woman and a man behind
As vigorous of mind, and yet it seems
Life scarce can cast a fragrance on the
wind,
Scarce spread a glory to the morning
beams,

But the torn petals strew the garden
plot ;
And there's but common greenness
after that.

And what if my descendants lose the
flower
Through natural declension of the soul,
Through too much business with the
passing hour,
Through too much play, or marriage
with a fool ?
May this laborious stair and this stark
tower
Become a roofless ruin that the owl
May build in the cracked masonry
and cry
Her desolation to the desolate sky.

The Primum Mobile that fashioned us
Has made the very owls in circles move ;
And I, that count myself most
prosperous,

Seeing that love and friendship are
 enough,
 For an old neighbour's friendship
 chose the house
 And decked and ltered it for girl's
 love,
 And know whatever flourish and decline
 These stones remain their monument
 and mine.

V

THE ROAD AT MY DOOR

An ffable Irregul r,
 A heavily built Falstaffian man,
 Comes cracking jokes of civil w r
 As though to die by gunshot were
 The finest play under the sun.

A brown Lieuten nt and his men,
 Half dressed in nation l uniform,
 Stand at my door, and I complain
 Of the foul weather, hail and r in,
 A pear tree broken by the storm.

I count those feathered balls of soot
 The moor-hen guides upon the stream,
 To silence the envy in my thought ;
 And turn towards my chamber, caught
 In the cold snows of a dream.

VI

THE STARE'S NEST BY MY WINDOW

The bees build in the crevices
 Of loosening masonry, and there
 The mother birds bring grubs and flies.
 My wall is loosening ; honey-bees,
 Come build in the empty house of the
 stare.

We are closed in, and the key is turned
 On our uncertainty ; somewhere
 A man is killed, or a house burned,
 Yet no clear fact to be discerned .
 Come build in the empty house of the
 st re.

A barricade of stone or of wood ;
Some fourteen days of civil war ,
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood :
Come build in the empty house of the
stare.

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare,
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love ; oh, honey-bees,
Come build in the empty house of the
stare.

VII

I SEE PHANTOMS OF HATRED AND OF
THE HEART'S FULLNESS AND OF
THE COMING EMPTINESS

- I climb to the tower top and lean upon
broken stone,
A mist that is like blown snow is
sweeping over all,

Valley, river, and elms, under the light
of a moon

That seems unlike itself, that seems
unchangeable,

A glittering sword out of the east. A
puff of wind

And those white glimmering frag-
ments of the mist sweep by

Frenzies bewilder, reveries perturb
the mind ;

Monstrous familiar images swim to
the mind's eye.

‘ Vengeance upon the murderers,’ the
cry goes up,

‘ Vengeance for Jacques Molay.’ In
cloud-pale rags, or in lace,

The rage-driven, rage-tormented, and
rage-hungry troop,

Trooper belabouring trooper, biting at
arm or at face,

Plunges towards nothing, arms and
fingers spreading wide

MEDITATIONS

9

For the embrace of nothing ; and I,
 my wits astray
Because of all that senseless tumult,
 all but cried
For vengeance on the murderers of
 Jacques Molay.

Their legs long, delicate and slender,
 aquamarine their eyes,
Magical unicorns bear ladies on their
 backs,
The ladies close their musing eyes.
 No prophecies,
Remembered out of Babylonian
 almanacs,
Have closed the ladies' eyes, their
 minds are but a pool
Where even longing drowns under its
 own excess ;
Nothing but stillness can remain when
 hearts are full
Of their own sweetness, bodies of their
 loveliness

The cloud-pale unicorns, the eyes of
aquamarine,
The quivering half-closed eyelids, the
rags of cloud or of lace,
Or eyes that rage has brightened, arms
it has made lean,
Give place to an indifferent multitude,
give place
To brazen hawks Nor self-delighting
reverie,
Nor hate of what's to come, nor pity
for what's gone,
Nothing but grip of claw, and the eye's
complacency,
The innumerable clanging wings that
have put out the moon.

I turn away and shut the door, and on
the stair
Wonder how many times I could have
proved my worth
In something that all others under-
stand or share;

But oh, ambitious heart, had such a
proof drawn forth
A company of friends, a conscience set
at ease,
It had but made us pine the more.
The abstract joy,
The half read wisdom of daemonic
images,
Suffice the ageing man as once the
growing boy.

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND
NINETEEN

I

MANY ingenious lovely things are gone
That seemed sheer miracle to the
 multitude,
Protected from the circle of the moon
That pitches common things about.
 There stood
Amid the ornamental bronze and stone
An ancient image made of olive wood—
And gone are Phidias' famous ivories
And all the golden grasshoppers and
 bees.

We too had many pretty toys when
 young ;
A law indifferent to blame or praise,

To bribe or threat ; habits that made
old wrong

Melt down, as it were wax in the sun's
rays ;

Public opinion ripening for so long
We thought it would outlive all future
days.

O what fine thought we had because
we thought

That the worst rogues and rascals had
died out.

All teeth were drawn, all ancient
tricks unlearned,

And a great army but a showy thing ;
What matter that no cannon had been
turned

Into a ploughshare ; parliament and
king

. Thought that unless a little powder
burned

The trumpeters might burst with
trumpeting

34 NINETEEN - NINETEEN

And yet it lack all glory ; and per-
chance

The guardsmen's drowsy chargers would
not prance.

Now days are dragon - ridden, the
nightmare

Rides upon sleep . a drunken soldiery
Can leave the mother, murdered at
her door,

To crawl in her own blood, and go
scot-free ;

The night can sweat with terror as
before

We pieced our thoughts into philo-
sophy,

And planned to bring the world under
a rule,

Who are but we sels fighting in a
hole

He who can read the signs nor sink
unmanned

Into the half-deceit of some intoxicant
 From shallow wits, who knows no
 work can stand,
 Whether health, wealth or peace of
 mind were spent
 On master work of intellect or hand,
 No honour leave its mighty monument,
 Has but one comfort left : all triumph
 would
 But break upon his ghostly solitude

But is there any comfort to be found ?
 Man is in love and loves what vanishes,
 What more is there to say ? That
 country round
 None dared admit, if such a thought
 were his,
 Incendiary or bigot could be found
 To burn that stump on the Acropolis,
 Or break in bits the famous ivories
 Or traffic in the grasshoppers or
 bees ?

II

When Loie Fuller's Chinese dancers
 enwound
A shining web, a floating ribbon of
 cloth,
It seemed that a dragon of air
Had fallen among dancers, had whirled
 them round
Or hurried them off on its own furious
 path ;
So the platonic year
Whirls out new right and wrong,
Whirls in the old instead ;
All men are dancers and their tread
Goes to the barbarous clangour of
 gong.

III

Some moralist or mythological poet
Compares the solitary soul to a swan ;
I am satisfied with that,

NINETEEN - NINETEEN 37

Satisfied if a troubled mirror show
it
Before that brief gleam of its life be
gone,
An image of its state ;
The wings half spread for flight,
The breast thrust out in pride
Whether to play, or to ride
Those winds that clamour of approach-
ing night.

A man in his own secret meditation
Is lost amid the labyrinth that he has
made
In art or politics ;
Some platonist affirms that in the
station
Where we should cast off body and trade
The ancient habit sticks,
And that if our works could
But vanish with our breath
That were a lucky death,
For triumph can but mar our solitude.

38 NINETEEN – NINETEEN

The swan has leaped into the desolate
heaven :

That image can bring wildness, bring
a rage

To end all things, to end

What my laborious life imagined,
even

The half imagined, the half written
page ;

O but we dreamed to mend

Whatever mischief seemed

To afflict mankind, but now

That winds of winter blow

Learn that we were crack-pated when
we dreamed.

IV

We, who seven years ago

Talked of honour and of truth,

Shriek with pleasure if we show

The weasel's twist, the weasel's tooth.

v

Come let us mock at the great
That had such burdens on the mind
And toiled so hard and late
To leave some monument behind,
Nor thought of the levelling wind.

Come let us mock at the wise ,
With all those calendars whereon
They fixed old aching eyes,
They never saw how seasons run,
And now but gape at the sun.

Come let us mock at the good
That fancied goodness might be gay,
And sick of solitude
Might proclaim a holiday ·
Wind shrieked—and where are they ?

Mock mockers after that
That would not lift a hand maybe
To help good, wise or great

40 NINETEEN – NINETEEN

To bar that foul storm out, for we
Traffic in mockery.

VI

Violence upon the roads violence of
 horses ,
Some few have handsome riders, are
 garlanded
On delicate sensitive ear or tossing
 mane,
But wearied running round and round
 in their courses
All break and vanish, and evil gathers
 head .
Herodias' daughters have returned
 again
A sudden blast of dusty wind and
 after
Thunder of feet, tumult of images,
Their purpose in the labyrinth of the
 wind ;

And should some crazy hand dare
touch a daughter

All turn with amorous cries, or angry
cries,

According to the wind, for all are blind.

But now wind drops, dust settles ;
thereupon

There lurches past, his great eyes
without thought

Under the shadow of stupid straw-
pale locks,

That insolent fiend Robert Artisson

To whom the love-lorn Lady Kyteler
brought

Bronzed peacock feathers, red combs
of her cocks.

THE WHEEL

THROUGH winter-time we call on
 spring,
And through the spring on summer call,
And when abounding hedges ring
Declare that winter's best of all ;
And after that there's nothing good
Because the spring-time has not
 come—
Nor know that what disturbs our
 blood
Is but its longing for the tomb.

YOUTH AND AGE

MUCH did I rage when young,
Being by the world oppressed,
But now with flattering tongue
It speeds the parting guest.

1 24

THE NEW FACES

IF you, that have grown old, were the
first dead,
Neither catalpa tree nor scented lime
Should hear my living feet, nor would
I tread
Where we wrought that shall break
the teeth of time.
Let the new faces play what tricks
they will
In the old rooms ; night can out-
balance day,
Our shadows rove the garden gravel
still,
The living seem more shadowy than
they.

A PRAYER FOR MY SON

BID a strong ghost stand at the head
That my Michael may sleep sound,
Nor cry, nor turn in the bed
Till his morning meal come round ;
And may departing twilight keep
All dread afar till morning's back,
That his mother may not lack
Her fill of sleep.

Bid the ghost have sword in fist :
Some there are, for I avow
Such devilish things exist,
Who have planned his murder for
they know
Of some most haughty deed or thought
That waits upon his future days,
And would through hatred of the bays
Bring that to nought.

46 A PRAYER FOR MY SON

Though You can fashion everything
From nothing every day, and teach
The morning stars to sing,
You have lacked articulate speech
To tell Your simplest want, and known,
Wailing upon a woman's knee,
All of that worst ignominy
Of flesh and bone ;

And when through all the town there
ran

The servants of Your enemy,
A woman and a man,
Unless the Holy Writings lie,
Hurried through the smooth and rough
And through the fertile and waste,
Protecting, till the danger past,
With human love.

TWO SONGS FROM A PLAY

I

I SAW a staring virgin stand
Where holy Dionysus died,
And tear the heart out of his side,
And lay the heart upon her hand
And bear that beating heart aw y ;
And then did all the Muses sing
Of Magnus Annus t the spring,
As though God's death were but a play.

Another Troy must rise and set,
Another lineage feed the crow,
Another Argo's painted prow
Drive to a flashier bauble yet.
• The Roman Empire stood appalled
It dropped the reins of peace and war
When that fierce virgin and her Star
Out of the fabulous darkness called.

48 TWO SONGS FROM A PLAY

II

In pity for man's darkening thought
He walked that room and issued thence
In Galilean turbulence ;
The Babylonian Starlight brought
A fabulous, formless darkness in ;
Odour of blood when Christ was slain
M de Plato's tolerance in vain
And vain the Doric discipline.

WISDOM

THE true faith discovered was
When painted panel, statuary,
Glass-mosaic, window-glass,
Straightened all that went awry
When some peasant gopeller
Imagined Him upon the floor
Of a working-carpenter.
Miracle had its playtime where
In damask clothed and on a seat,
Chryselephantine, cedar boarded,
His majestic Mother sat
Stitching at purple hoarded,
That He might be nobly breeched,
In starry towers of Babylon
Noah's freshet never reached.
King Abundance got Him on
Innocence ; and Wisdom He.

That cognomen sounded best
Considering what wild infancy
Drove horror from His Mother's
breast.

LEDA AND THE SWAN

A SUDDEN blow · the great wings
 beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs
 caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in
 his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his
 breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers
 push
The feathered glory from her loosening
 thighs ?
And how can body, laid in that white
 rush
But feel the strange heart beating
 where it lies ?

52 LEDA AND THE SWAN

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and
tower

And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the
air,

Did she put on his knowledge with his
power

Before the indifferent beak could let
her drop ?

1923

ON A PICTURE OF A BLACK
CENTAUR BY EDMOND DULAC

YOUR hooves have stamped at the
black margin of the wood,
Even where horrible green parrots call
and swing.
My works are all stamped down into
the sultry mud.
I knew that horse play, knew it for a
murderous thing.
What wholesome sun has ripened is
wholesome food to eat
And that alone; yet I, being driven
half insane
. Bec use of some green wing, gathered
old mummy wheat
In the mad abstract dark and ground
it grain by grain

54 A BLACK CENTAUR

And after baked it slowly in an oven ;
 but now
I bring full flavoured wine out of
 barrel found
Where seven Ephesian topers slept
 and never knew
When Alexander's empire past, they
 slept so sound.
Stretch out your limbs and sleep a
 long Saturnian sleep ;
I have loved you better than my soul
 for all my words,
And there is none so fit to keep a
 watch and keep
Unwearied eyes upon those horrible
 green birds

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

I

I WALK through the long schoolroom
questioning,
A kind old nun in a white hood replies ;
The children learn to cipher and to
sing,
To study reading-books and history,
To cut and sew, be neat in everything
In the best modern way—the chil-
dren's eyes
In momentary wonder stare upon
A sixty year old smiling public man

II

I dream of a Ledæan body, bent
Above a sinking fire, a tale that she

56 AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event
That changed some childish day to
tragedy—
Told, and it seemed that our two
natures blent
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,
Or else, to alter Plato's parable,
Into the yolk and white of the one
shell.

III

And thinking of th t fit of grief or
rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that
ge—
For even daughters of the swan can
share
Something of every p ddler's heri-
tage—
And had that colour upon cheek or
hair

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN 57

And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats in to the
mind—

Did quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank
the wind

And took a mess of shadows for its
meat ?

And I though never of Ledæan kind
Had pretty plumage once—enough of
that,

Better to smile on ll that smile, and
show

There is a comfortable kind of old
scarecrow.

V

Wh t youthful mother, a shape upon
her lap

58 AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

Honey of generation had betrayed,
And that must sleep, shriek, struggle
to escape
As recollection or the drug decide,
Would think her son, did she but see
that shape
With sixty or more winters on its
head,
A compensation for the pang of his
birth,
Or the uncertainty of his setting
forth ?

VI

Plato thought nature but spume
that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things ,
Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings ;
World-famous golden-thighed Pytha-
goras
Fingered upon a fiddle stick or strings

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN 59

What a star sang and careless Muses
heard :
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare
bird.

VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images,
But those the candles light are not as
those
That animate a mother's reveries,
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.
And yet they too break hearts — O
Presences
That passion, piety or affection knows,
And that all heavenly glory sym-
bolise—
O self-born mockers of man's enter-
prise ;

VIII

L hour is blossoming or dancing where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,

60 AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

Nor beauty born out of its own
despair,

Nor bleary-eyed wisdom out of midnight
oil.

O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the
bole ?

O body swayed to music, O brighten-
ing glance,

How can we know the dancer from the
dance ?

COLONUS' PRAISE

(From 'Oedipus at Colonus')

CHORUS

COME praise Colonus' horses and come
praise

The wine dark of the wood's intricacies,

The nightingale that deafens daylight
there,

If daylight ever visit where,

Unvisited by tempest or by sun,

Immortal ladies tread the ground

Dizzy with harmonious sound,

Semele's lad a gay companion.

And yonder in the gymnasts' garden
thrives

62 COLONUS' PRAISE

The self-sown, self-begotten shape that
gives

Athenian intellect its mastery,
Even the grey-leaved olive tree
Miracle-bred out of the living stone ;
Nor accident of peace nor war
Shall wither that old marvel, for
The great grey-eyed Athene stares
thereon.

Who comes into this country, and has
come

Where golden crocus and narcissus
bloom,

Where the Great Mother, mourning
for her daughter

And beauty-drunken by the water
Glittering among grey-leaved olive
trees,

Has plucked a flower and sung her loss ;

Who finds abounding Cephissus

Has found the loveliest spectacle there

is.

COLONUS' PRAISE 63

Because this country has a pious mind
And so remembers that when all
 mankind
But trod the road, or paddled by the
 shore,
Poseidon gave it bit and oar,
Every Colonus lad or lass discourses
Of that oar and of that bit ;
Summer and winter, day and night,
Of horses and horses of the sea, white
 horses.

THE HERO, THE GIRL, AND THE FOOL

THE GIRL

I RAGE at my own image in the glass,
That's so unlike myself that when you
 praise it
It is as though you praised another,
 or even
Mocked me with praise of my mere
 opposite ;
And when I wake towards morn I
 dread myself
For the heart cries that what deception
 wins
Cruelty must keep ; therefore be
 warned and go
If you have seen that im ge and not
 the wom n.

THE HERO

I have regretted at my own strength
because you have loved it.

THE GIRL

If you are no more strength than I am
beauty
I had better find a convent and turn
nun ;
A nun at least has all men's rever-
ence
And needs no cruelty.

THE HERO

I have heard one say
That men have reverence for their
holiness
And not themselves.

THE GIRL

Say on and say
That only God has loved us for ourselves,
But what care I that long for man's
love ?

THE FOOL BY THE ROADSIDE

When my days that have
From cradle run to grave
From grave to cradle run instead ;
When thoughts that a fool
Has wound upon a spool
Are but loose thread, are but loose
thread.

When cradle and spool are past
And I mere shade at last
Coagulate of stuff
Transparent like the wind,
I think that I may find
A faithful love, a faithful love.

OWEN AHERN AND HIS
DANCERS

I

A TRANGE thing surely that my heart
when love had come unsought
Upon the Norman upland or in that
poplar shade,
Should find no burden but itself and
yet should be worn out.
It could not bear that burden and
therefore it went mad.

The south wind brought it longing, and
the east wind despair,
The west wind made it pitiful, and the
north wind afraid
It feared to give its love a hurt with all
the tempest there ;

It feared the hurt that she could give
and therefore it went mad

I can exchange opinion with any
neighbouring mind,
I have as healthy flesh and blood as
any rhymer's had,
But oh my Heart could bear no more
when the upland caught the wind ;
I ran, I ran, from my love's side
because my Heart went mad.

II

The Heart behind its rib lugged out,
'You have called me mad,' it said.
'Because I made you turn away and
run from that young child ;
How could she mate with fifty years
that was so wildly bred ?
Let the cage bird and the cage bird
mate and the wild bird mate in
the wild.'

' You but imagine lies all day, O
murderer,' I replied.

' And all those lies have but one end
poor wretches to betray ;

I did not find in any cage the woman
at my side.

O but her heart would break to learn
my thoughts are far away.'

' Speak all your mind,' my Heart sang
out, ' speak all your mind ; who
cares,

Now that your tongue cannot persude
the child till she mistake

Her childish gratitude for love and
match your fifty years.

O let her choose a young man now and
all for his wild sake.'

A MAN YOUNG AND OLD

FIRST LOVE

THOUGH nurtured like the sailing moon
In beauty's murderous brood,
She walked awhile and blushed awhile
And on my pathway stood
Until I thought her body bore
A heart of flesh and blood.

But since I laid a hand thereon
And found a heart of stone
I have attempted many things
And not a thing is done,
For every hand is lunatic
That travels on the moon.

She smiled and that transfigured me
And left me but a lout,

A MAN YOUNG AND OLD 71

Maundering here, and maundering
there,
Emptier of thought
Than heavenly circuit of its stars
When the moon sails out.

HUMAN DIGNITY

Like the moon her kindness is,
If kindness I may call
What has no comprehension in't,
But is the same for all
As though my sorrow were a scene
Upon a painted wall.

So like a bit of stone I lie
Under a broken tree
I could recover if I shrieked
My heart's agony
To passing bird, but I am dumb
From human dignity.

72 A MAN YOUNG AND OLD

THE MERMAID

A mermaid found a swimming lad,
Picked him for her own,
Pressed her body to his body,
Laughed ; and plunging down
Forgot in cruel happiness
That even lovers drown.

THE DEATH OF THE HARE

I have pointed out the yelling pack,
The hare leap to the wood,
And when I pass a compliment
Rejoice as lover should
At the drooping of n eye
Or mantling of the blood.

Then suddenly my heart is wrung
By her distr cted air
And I remember wildness lost
And after, swept from there,
Am set down standing in the wood
At the death of the hare.

A MAN YOUNG AND OLD 7

THE EMPTY CUP

A crazy man that found a cup,
When all but dead of thirst,
Hardly dared to wet his mouth
Imagining, moon accursed,
That another mouthful
And his beating heart would burst.
October last I found it too
But found it dry as bone,
And for that reason am I crazed
And my sleep is gone.

HIS MEMORIES

We should be hidden from their
eyes,
Being but holy shows
And bodies broken like a thorn
Whereon the bleak north blows,
To think of buried Hector
And that none living knows.

74 A MAN YOUNG AND OLD

The women take so little stock
In what I do or say
They'd sooner leave their cosseting
To hear a jackass bray ;
My arms are like the twisted thorn
And yet there beauty lay ;

The first of all the tribe lay there
And did such pleasure take—
She who had brought great Hector
down
And put all Troy to wrack—
That she cried into this ear
Strike me if I shriek.

THE FRIENDS OF HIS YOUTH

Laughter not time destroyed my
voice
And put that crack in it,
And when the moon's pot-bellied
I get a laughing fit,

A MAN YOUNG AND OLD 75

For that old Madge comes down the lane
A stone upon her breast,
And a cloak wrapped about the stone,
And she can get no rest
With singing hush and hush-a-bye ,
She that has been wild
And barren as a breaking wave
Thinks that the stone's a child.
And Peter that had great affairs
And was a pushing man
Shrieks ' I am King of the Peacocks,'
And perches on a stone ;
And then I laugh till tears run down
And the heart thumps at my side,
Remembering that her shriek was love
And that he shrieks from pride.

SUMMER AND SPRING

We sat under an old thorn-tree
And talked away the night,
Told all that had been said or done
Since first we saw the light,

76 A MAN YOUNG AND OLD

And when we talked of growing up
Knew that we'd halved a soul
And fell the one in t'other's arms
That we might make it whole ;
Then Peter had a murdering look
For it seemed that he and she
Had spoken of their childish days
Under that very tree.
O what a bursting out there was,
And what a blossoming,
When we had all the summer time
And she had all the spring.

THE SECRETS OF THE OLD

I have old women's secrets now
That had those of the young ;
Madge tells me what I dared not
think
When my blood was strong,
And what had drowned a lover once
Sounds like an old song.

A MAN YOUNG AND OLD 77

Though Margery is stricken dumb
If thrown in Madge's way,
We three make up a solitude ;
For none alive to-day
Can know the stories that we know
Or say the things we s y :

How such a man pleased women
 most
Of all that are gone,
How such a pair loved many years
And such a pair but one,
Stories of the bed of straw
Or the bed of down

HIS WILDNESS

O bid me mount and s il up there
Amid the cloudy wrack,
For Peg and Meg and Paris' love
That had so straight back,
Are gone away, and some that stay
Have ch nged their silk for sack.

78 A MAN YOUNG AND OLD

Were I but there and none to hear
I'd have a peacock cry
For that is natural to a man
That lives in memory,
Being all alone I'd nurse a stone
And sing it lullaby.

THE THREE MONUMENTS

THEY hold their public meetings where
Our most renowned patriots stand,
One among the birds of the air,
A stumpier on either hand ;
And all the popular statesmen say
That purity built up the state
And after kept it from decay ,
Admonish us to cling to that
And let all base ambition be,
For intellect would make us proud
And pride bring in impurity ·
The three old rascals laugh aloud.

FROM ' OEDIPUS AT COLONUS '

I

ENDURE what life God gives and ask no
longer span ;
Cease to remember the delights of
youth, travel-wearied aged man ;
Delight becomes death-longing if all
longing else be vain.

II

Even from that delight memory
treasures so,
Death, despair, division of families,
all entanglements of mankind
grow,
As that old wandering beggar and
these God-hated children know.

III

In the long echoing street the laughing
dancers throng,
The bride is carried to the bridegroom's
chamber through torchlight and
tumultuous song ;
I celebrate the silent kiss that ends
short life or long.

IV

Never to have lived is best, ancient
writers say ;
Never to have drawn the breath of life,
never to have looked into the eye
of day ;
The second best's a gay goodnight and
quickly turn away.

THE GIFT OF HARUN
AL-RASHID

KUSTA BEN LUKA is my name, I write
To Abd Al-Rabban ; fellow roysterer
once,

Now the good Caliph's learned
Treasurer,
And for no ear but his.

Carry this letter
Through the great gallery of the
Treasure House
Where banners of the Caliphs hang,
night-coloured
But brilliant as the night's embroidery,
And wait war's music ; pass the little
gallery ;
Pass books of learning from Byzantium
Written in gold upon a purple stain,

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 83

And pause at last, I was about to say,
At the great book of Sappho's song;
 but no,
For should you leave my letter there,
 a boy's
Love-lorn, indifferent hands might
 come upon it
And let it fall unnoticed to the floor.
Pause at the Treatise of Parmenides
And hide it there, for Caliphs to
 world's end
Must keep that perfect, as they keep
 her song
So great its fame.

 When fitting time has passed
The parchment will disclose to some
 learned man
A mystery that else had found no
 chronicler
But the wild Bedouin. Though I
 approve
Those wanderers that welcomed in
 their tents

84 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

What great Harun Al-Rashid, occupied
With Persian embassy or Grecian
war,

Must needs neglect ; I cannot hide
the truth

That wandering in a desert, featureless
As air under a wing, can give birds'
wit

In after time they will speak much of
me

And speak but phantasy. Recall the
year

When our beloved Caliph put to death
His Vizir Jaffer for an unknown
reason ;

'If but the shirt upon my body
knew it

I'd tear it off and throw it in the
fire.'

That speech was all that the town
knew, but he

Seemed for a while to have grown
young again ;

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 85

Seemed so on purpose, muttered
Jaffer's friends,

That none might know that he was
conscience-struck—

But that's traitor's thought.

Enough for me

That in the early summer of the year
The mightiest of the princes of the
world

Came to the least considered of his
courtiers ;

Sat down upon the fountain's marble
edge

One hand amid the goldfish in the
pool ;

And thereupon a colloquy took place
That I commend to all the chroniclers
To show how violent great hearts can
lose

Their bitterness and find the honey-
comb.

' I have brought a slender bride into
the house ;

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 87

Like this pure jet, now lost amid blue
sky

Now bathing lily leaf and fishes' scale,
Be mimicry ?'

' What matter if our souls
Are nearer to the surface of the body
Than souls that start no game and
turn no rhyme !

The soul's own youth and not the
body's youth

Shows through our lineaments. My
candle's bright,

My lantern is too loyal not to show

That it was made in your great
father's reign.'

' And yet the jasmine season warms
our blood '

' Great prince, forgive the freedom of
my speech ;

You think that love has seasons, and
you think

88 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

That if the spring bear off what the
spring gave

The heart need suffer no defeat ; but I
Who have accepted the Byzantine
faith,

Th t seems unnatural to Arabian
minds,

Think when I choose bride I choose
for ever ;

And if her eye should not grow bright
for mine

Or brighten only for some younger eye,
My heart could never turn from d ily
run,

Nor find a remedy.'

‘ But what if I

Have lit upon woman, who so shares
Your thirst for those old crabbed
mysteries,

So strains to look beyond our life, an
eye

That never knew that strain would
scarce seem bright,

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 89

And yet herself can seem youth's very
fountain,

Being all brimmed with life.'

' Were it but true

I would have found the best that life
can give,

Companionship in those mysterious
things

That make a man's soul or a woman's
soul

Itself and not some other soul '

' That love

Must needs be in this life and in wh t
follows

Unchanging and at peace, and it is right
Every philosopher should praise that
love.

But I being none can praise its
opposite.

It makes my passion stronger but to
think

Like passion stirs the peacock and his
mate,

90 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

The wild stag and the doe; that
mouth to mouth

Is a man's mockery of the changeless
soul.'

And thereupon his bounty gave what
now

Can shake more blossom from autumnal
chill

Than all my bursting springtime knew.

A girl

Perched in some window of her
mother's house

Had watched my daily passage to and
fro ;

Had heard impossible history of my
past ,

Imagined some impossible history

Lived at my side ; thought time's
disfiguring touch

Gave but more reason for a woman's
care.

Yet was it love of me, or was it
love

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 91

Of the stark mystery that has dazed
my sight,

Perplexed her phantasy and planned
her care ?

Or did the torchlight of that mystery
Pick out my features in such light and
shade

Two contemplating passions chose one
theme

Through sheer bewilderment ? She
had not paced

The garden paths, nor counted up the
rooms,

Before she had spread book upon
her knees

And asked about the pictures or the
text ;

And often those first days I saw her
stare

On old dry writing in a learned
tongue,

On old dry faggots that could never
please

92 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

The extravagance of spring ; or move
a hand

As if that writing or the figured page
Were some dear cheek.

Upon a moonless night
I sat where I could watch her sleeping
form,

And wrote by candle - light ; but her
form moved,

And fearing that my light disturbed
her sleep

I rose that I might screen it with
cloth.

I heard her voice, ' Turn that I may
expound

What's bowed your shoulder and made
pale your cheek ' ;

And saw her sitting upright on the
bed ;

Or was it she that spoke or some great
Djinn ?

I say that a Djinn spoke. A live-long
hour

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 93

She seemed the learned man and I the
child ;

Truths without father came, truths
that no book

Of all the uncounted books that I have
read,

Nor thought out of her mind or mine
begot,

Self - born, high - born, and solitary
truths,

Those terrible implacable straight lines
Drawn through the wandering vege-
tative dream,

Even those truths that when my bones
are dust

Must drive the Arabian host.

The voice grew still,

And she lay down upon her bed and slept,
But woke at the first gleam of day,

rose up

And swept the house and sang about
her work

In childish ignorance of all that passed.

94 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

A dozen nights of natural sleep, and
then

When the full moon swam to its
greatest height

She rose, and with her eyes shut fast
in sleep

Walked through the house. Un-
noticed and unfelt

I wrapped her in heavy hooded
cloak, and she,

Half running, dropped at the first
ridge of the desert

And there marked out those emblems
on the sand

That day by day I study and marvel at,
With her white finger. I led her home
asleep

And once again she rose and swept the
house

In childish ignorance of all that passed
Even to-day, after some seven years
When maybe thrice in every moon her
mouth

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 95

Murmured the wisdom of the desert

Djinn,

She keeps that ignorance, nor has
she now

That first unnatural interest in my
books.

It seems enough that I am there ;
and yet

Old fellow student, whose most patient
ear

Heard all the anxiety of my passionate
youth,

It seems I must buy knowledge with
my peace.

What if she lose her ignorance and so

Dream that I love her only for the
voice,

That every gift and every word of
praise

Is but payment for that midnight
voice

That is to age what milk is to a
child !

96 GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

Were she to lose her love, because she
had lost

Her confidence in mine, or even lose
Its first simplicity, love, voice and all,
All my fine feathers would be plucked
away

And I left shivering. The voice has
drawn

A quality of wisdom from her love's
Particular quality. The signs and
shapes ;

All those abstractions that you fancied
were

From the great treatise of Parmenides ;
All, all those gyres and cubes and
midnight things

Are but a new expression of her body
Drunk with the bitter sweetness of her
youth.

And now my utmost mystery is out.
A woman's beauty is a storm-tossed
banner ;

Under it wisdom stands, and I alone—

GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID 97

Of all Arabia's lovers I alone—
Nor dazzled by the embroidery, nor
lost
In the confusion of its night-dark
folds,
Can hear the armed man speak.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT

AN EPILOGUE TO 'A VISION'

MIDNIGHT has come and the great
Christ Church Bell,
And many a lesser bell, sound through
the room ,
And it is All Souls' Night,
And two long glasses brimmed with
muscatel
Bubble upon the table. A ghost may
come ;
For it is ghost's right,
His element is so fine
Being sharpened by his death,
To drink from the wine-bre th
While our gross pal tes drink from
the whole wine.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT 99

I need some mind that, if the cannon
 sound
From every quarter of the world, c n
 stay
Wound in mind's pondering,
As mummies in the mummy-cloth re
 wound ;
Because I h ve a marvellous thing to
 say,
A certain marvellous thing
None but the living mock,
Though not for sober ear ;
It may be all th t he r
Should laugh and weep an hour upon
 the clock.

H—'s the first I call. He loved
 strange thought
And knew that sweet extremity of
 pride
That's called platonic love,
And that to such a pitch of p ssion
 wrought

100 ALL SOULS' NIGHT

Nothing could bring him, when his
lady died,
Anodyne for his love.
Words were but wasted breath ;
One dear hope had he :
The inclemency
Of th t or the next winter would be
death.

Two thoughts were so mixed up I
could not tell
Whether of her or God he thought the
most,
But think that his mind's eye,
When upward turned, on one sole
image fell ;
And that a slight companionable ghost,
Wild with divinity,
Had so lit up the whole
Immense miraculous house,
The Bible promised us,
It seemed gold-fish swimming in
bowl.

ALL SOULS' NIGHT 101

On Florence Emery I call the next,
Who finding the first wrinkles on f ce
Admired and beautiful,
And knowing that the future would
be vexed
With 'minished beauty, multiplied
commonplace,
Preferred to teach a school,
Away from neighbour or friend
Among dark skins, and there
Permit foul years to wear
Hidden from eyesight to the un-
noticed end.

Before that end much had she ravelled
out
From a discourse in figurative speech
By some learned Indian
On the soul's journey. How it is
whirled about,
Wherever the orbit of the moon c n
reach,
Until it plunge into the sun ;

102 ALL SOULS' NIGHT

And there, free and yet fast
Being both Chance and Choice,
Forget its broken toys
And sink into its own delight at last.

And I call up MacGregor from the
 grave,
For in my first hard springtime we
 were friends,
Although of late estranged.
I thought him half a lunatic, half
 knave,
And told him so, but friendship never
 ends ;
And what if mind seem changed,
And it seem changed with the mind,
When thoughts rise up unbid
On generous things that he did
And I grow half contented to be blind

He had much industry at setting out,
Much boisterous courage, before loneli-
 ness

ALL SOULS' NIGHT 10

Had driven him crazed ;
For meditations upon unknown
thought
Make human intercourse grow less and
less ;
They re neither paid nor praised
But he'd object to the host,
The glass because my glass ;
A ghost-lover he was
And may have grown more arrogant
being a ghost

But names are nothing. What matter
who it be,
So that his elements have grown so
fine
The fume of muscatel
Can give his sharpened palate ecstasy
No living man can drink from the
whole wine.
I h ve mummy truths to tell
Whereat the living mock,
Though not for sober ear,

104 ALL SOULS' NIGHT

For maybe all that hear
Should laugh and weep an hour upon
the clock.

Such thought — such thought have I
that hold it tight
Till meditation mster ll its parts,
Nothing can stay my glance
Until that glance run in the world's
despite
To where the damned h ve howled
away their hearts,
And where the blessed dance ;
Such thought, that in it bound
I need no other thing
Wound in mind's wandering,
As mummies in the mummy-cloth are
wound.

NOTES

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

STANZA IV

I HAVE read somewhere that in the Emperor's palace at Byzantium was a tree made of gold and silver, and artificial birds that sang

THE TOWER. PART II

The persons mentioned are associated by legend, story and tradition with the neighbourhood of Thoor Ballylee or Ballylee Castle, where the poem was written. Mrs French lived at Peterswell in the eighteenth century and was related to Sir Jonah Barrington, who described the incident of the ear and the trouble that came of it. The peasant beauty and the blind poet are Mary Hynes and Raftery, and the incident of the man drowned in Cloone Bog is recorded in my *Celtic Twilight*. Hanrahan's

pursuit of the phantom hare and hounds is from my *Stories of Red Hanrahan*. The ghosts have been seen at their game of dice in what is now my bedroom, and the old bankrupt man lived about a hundred years ago. According to one legend he could only leave the Castle upon a Sunday because of his creditors, and according to another he hid in the secret passage.

THE TOWER PART III

In the passage about the Swan I have unconsciously echoed one of the loveliest lyrics of our time—Mr Sturge Moore's 'Dying Swan'. I often recited it during an American lecturing tour, which explains the theft.

THE DYING SWAN

O silver-throated Swan
Struck, struck! A golden dart
Clean through thy breast has gone
Home to thy heart
Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!
O silver trumpet, pour
Love for defiance back

On him who smote !
And brim, brim o'er
With love , and ruby-dye thy track
Down thy last living reach
Of river, sail the golden light—
Enter the sun's heart—even teach,
O wondrous-gifted pam, teach thou
The God to love, let him learn how !

When I wrote the lines about Plato and Plotinus I forgot that it is something in our own eyes that makes us see them as all transcendence. Has not Plotinus written 'Let every soul recall, then, at the outset the truth that soul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all, whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky , it is the maker of the sun , itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion — and it is a principle distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honourable than they, for they gather or dissolve as soul brings them life or abandons them, but soul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal being'.

MEDITATIONS IN TIME OF
CIVIL WAR

These poems were written at Thoor Ballylee in 1922, during the civil war. Before they were finished the Republicans blew up our 'ancient bridge' one midnight. They forbade us to leave the house, but were otherwise polite, even saying at last 'Goodnight, thank you' as though we had given them the bridge.

SECTION SIX

In the West of Ireland we call a startling a stare, and during the civil war one built in a hole in the masonry by my bedroom window.

SECTION SEVEN, STANZA II

The cry 'Vengeance on the murderers of Jacques Molay', Grand Master of the Templars, seems to me fit symbol for those who labour from hatred, and so for sterility in various kinds. It is said to have been incorporated in the ritual of certain Masonic societies of the eighteenth century, and to have fed class-hatred.

SECTION SEVEN, STANZA IV

I have a ring with a hawk and a butterfly upon it, to symbolise the straight road of logic, and so of mechanism, and the crooked road of intuition ' For wisdom is a butterfly and not a gloomy bird of prey '

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND NINETEEN

SECTION SIX

The country people see at times certain apparitions whom they name now ' fallen angels ', now ' ancient inhabitants of the country ', and describe as riding at whiles ' with flowers upon the heads of the horses ' I have assumed in the sixth poem that these horsemen, now that the times worsen, give way to worse My last symbol, Robert Artisson, was an evil spirit much run after in Kilkenny at the start of the fourteenth century Are not those who travel in the whirling dust also in the Platonic Year ?

TWO SONGS FROM A PLAY

These songs are sung by the Chorus in a play that has for its theme Christ's first appearance

to the Apostles after the Resurrection, a play intended for performance in a drawing-room or studio

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN

STANZA III

I have taken 'the honey of generation' from Porphyry's essay on 'The Cave of the Nymphs', but find no warrant in Porphyry for considering it the 'drug' that destroys the 'recollection' of pre-natal freedom. He blamed a cup of oblivion given in the zodiacal sign of Cancer

THE GIFT OF HARUN AL-RASHID

Part of an unfinished set of poems, dialogues and stories about John Ahern and Michael Robartes, Kusta ben Luka, a philosopher of Bagdad, and his Bedoun followers.

THE END

Y W. YEATS

THE COLLECTED WORKS

*Attractively bound in green cloth, with
cover design by CHARLES RICKETTS*

Crown 8vo 10s 6d net each

LATER POEMS

PLAYS IN PROSE AND VERSE

PLAYS AND CONTROVERSIES

ESSAYS

EARLY POEMS AND STORIES

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES REVERIES OVER CHILD-
HOOD AND YOUTH, AND THE TREMBLING
OF THE VEIL Illustrated

SELECTED POEMS LYRICAL AND NARRATIVE

Crown 8vo 7s 6d net

RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER POEMS Crown

8vo 4s 6d net

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE Poems Crown 8vo

3s 6d net

THE TOWER Crown 8vo 6s net

MACMILLAN AND CO, LTD, LONDON